

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 16, and 17 are pending in the application.

Specification

Minor changes have been made to the specification to place it in better form for U.S. practice.

Claim Objections

Claim 17 has been objected to because of some informalities.

In view of this, amendments have been made to claim 17, as suggested by the Examiner, to overcome this objection.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this objection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 16, and 17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hashimoto (USP 5,743,115) in view of Ando et al. (JP 2001-276484) and Spriggs et al. (USP 5,873,268). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

(Claim 1)

In the Office Action, the Examiner maintains that:

The further limitations of Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, and 16 are considered to be intended use of the washing machine as taught by Hashimoto in view of Ando and Spriggs and are not further limiting in so far as the structure of the apparatus concerned. . . . For example, the apparatus of Hashimoto in view of Ando and Spriggs is capable of adding metal ions to water and having mild and powerful swirl periods.

Although Applicants do not fully agree with the Examiner's interpretation of the pending claims, claim 1 has been amended to claim:

a time measuring portion for measuring time of duration of each period of a predetermined process in a laundry washing session,

wherein

in the predetermined process, the control unit controls at least one of the metal ion adding portion and the treatment substance adding portion, so that at least one of the metal ions and the treatment substance is added to the water in the washing tub and attached to a surface of laundry,

the predetermined process includes,

first and second powerful swirl periods and a mild swirl period, or

first and second powerful swirl periods and a still period,

the control unit controls the water flow controlling portion based on the time measured by the time measuring portion, such that

the mild swirl period or still period comes after the first powerful swirl period and the second powerful swirl period comes after the mild swirl period or still period, the second powerful swirl period being shorter than the first powerful swirl period, and

the control unit controls the water flow controlling portion based on the time measured by the time measuring portion, such that the time of the predetermined process is longer when metal ions are added than when no metal ions are added but the treatment substance is added. (emphasis added)

This feature is disclosed, for example, in page 33, lines 2-6 of the specification.

Applicants submit that the foregoing claim limitations are no longer "intended use" of the washing machine, and even assuming that the Examiner's interpretation of the cited references is reasonable, which Applicants do not admit, Hashimoto in view of Ando and Spriggs fails to

disclose or suggest the “time measuring portion for measuring time of duration of each period of a predetermined process in a laundry washing session,” as recited in claim 1.

Claims 4, 5, 7, and 16, dependent on claim 1, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 1.

(Claims 8 and 17)

In the Office Action, the Examiner maintains that:

The further limitations of Claims 8, 10, and 17 are considered to be intended use of the washing machine as taught by Hashimoto in view of Ando and Spriggs and are not further limiting in so far as the structure of the apparatus is concerned.

Although Applicants do not fully agree with the Examiner’s interpretation of the pending claims, claim 8 has been amended to claim:

a detecting portion detecting whether the metal ions have been added to the water in final rinsing before a squeezing process;

an unbalance detecting portion detecting unbalance in the washing tub;

.....

wherein when the unbalance detecting portion detects unbalance in the washing tub during squeezing rotation of the washing tub performed thereafter, and the detecting means detects that the metal ions have been added in the final rinsing, the control unit controls the unbalance correcting portion and the metal ion adding portion to execute rinsing for correcting uneven spreading of laundry in which, while water having the metal ions added thereto is supplied, agitation is performed. (*emphasis added*)

This feature is disclosed at least in Fig. 14 of the present application.

Applicants submit that the foregoing claim limitations are no longer “intended use” of the washing machine, and even assuming that the Examiner’s interpretation of the cited references

are reasonable, which Applicants do not admit, Hashimoto in view of Ando and Spriggs fails to disclose or suggest the “detecting portion detecting whether the metal ions have been added to the water in final rinsing before a squeezing process,” and does not control the unbalance correction portion and the metal ion addition portion to execute rinsing for correcting uneven spreading of laundry “when the unbalance detecting portion detects unbalance in the washing tub during squeezing rotation of the washing tub performed thereafter, and the detecting portion detects that the metal ions have been added in the final rinsing,” as recited in claim 8.

Claim 10, dependent on claim 8, is allowable at least for its dependency on claim 8.

Claim 17 has been amended to claim:

an informing portion giving an indication and/or notification that water having no metal ions added thereto is being supplied to the washing tub

wherein when the unbalance detecting portion detects unbalance in the washing tub during squeezing rotation of the washing tub performed thereafter, and the detecting portion detects that the metal ions have been added in the final rinsing, the control unit controls the unbalance correcting portion to execute rinsing for correcting uneven spreading of laundry in which, while water having no metal ions added thereto is supplied, agitation is performed, and

controls the informing portion to give an indication and/or notification that water having no metal ions added thereto is being supplied.

This feature is disclosed in page 39, lines 10-12 of the specification.

Applicants submit that the foregoing claim limitations are no longer “intended use” of the washing machine, and even assuming that the Examiner’s interpretation of the cited references are reasonable, which Applicants do not admit, Hashimoto in view of Ando and Spriggs fails to disclose or suggest the “informing portion giving an indication and/or notification that water

having no metal ions added thereto is being supplied to the washing tub,” when the unbalance detecting portion detects unbalance in the washing tub during squeezing rotation of the washing tub performed thereafter, as recited in claim 17.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Conclusion


Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and objections, and allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Maki Hatsumi Reg. No. 40,417 at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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